

SCIENCE AND TOURISM EDUCATION: National observatory for Tourism Education

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses relevant assertions about the scientific and academic nature of Tourism. The theoretical framework analyses the present scientific status and the maturity of the Tourism Studies as an academic subject. The empirical investigation systematizes the collection of the secondary data from the reality of Portuguese higher education, with the purpose to demonstrate the importance of this study area after the implementation of the curricular and educational changes of the Bologna Process. In the sequence of this analysis, we can conclude that Tourism has been gradually recognized both as a Science and an important academic subject in Portugal. **Keywords:** Tourismology, tourism education, national perspective, observatory.

RESUMEN: El presente artículo discute aserciones relevantes sobre la naturaleza académica y científica del Turismo. El cuadro conceptual incide en el análisis del actual estatuto y madurez de los Estudios del Turismo en cuanto objeto académico. La investigación empírica sistematiza datos secundarios sobre la realidad de la enseñanza superior en Portugal, con el objetivo de demostrar la importancia de esta área de estudios después de la implementación de los cambios curriculares y educativos del Proceso de Bolonia. A la continuación de este análisis, podemos concluir que el Turismo ha sido gradualmente reconocido en Portugal, sea como una Ciencia, sea como un importante área académica. **Palabras clave:** Turismología, formación en turismo, perspectiva nacional, observatorio.

RESUMO: O presente artigo discute asserções relevantes sobre a natureza académica e científica do Turismo. O quadro conceptual incide na análise do actual estatuto e maturidade dos Estudos do Turismo enquanto objecto académico. A investigação empírica sistematiza dados secundários sobre a realidade do ensino superior em Portugal, com o objective de demonstrar a importância desta área de estudos após a implementação das alterações curriculares e educativas do Processo de Bolonha. Na sequência desta análise, podemos concluir que o Turismo tem sido gradualmente reconhecido em Portugal, quer como uma Ciência, quer como importante área académica. **Palavras chave:** Turismologia, formação em turismo, perspectiva nacional, observatório.

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INTRODUCTION

The design of a model with the objective of organizing the teaching of Tourism in Portugal is a perceived need by the various stakeholders in the education system. This model could include many variables inherent to the complexity of the system of tourism, which we highlight in this article and which result from the conjunction with the national scientific and educational systems. In fact, we intend to assume the defense of the necessity of recognizing the status of scientific/academic tourism, due to its increasing relevance in the Portuguese higher education institutions.

The objectives of the proposition aim to clarify the level of scientific maturity that has been achieved by Tourism. In fact, its use as an area of study by experts from several traditional disciplines progressively allowed enrichment of their specific body of knowledge. However, this situation has created many institutional barriers to its proclamation as an autonomous scientific object, either within universities or polytechnics. Thus, this work is considered important to provide a useful argument in order to discuss the foundation of the disciplinary and scientific field for Tourism, based on the argument of the high implementation by the Portuguese teaching institutions, in all levels of training and research in this area of knowledge.

Initially, we proceed with the review of recent studies by researchers who frequently discuss the current situation of Tourism Studies, namely Munar (2007), who interprets the role of the Bologna Process in the globalization of Tourism Education, as well as Cervera-Taulet and Ruiz-Molina (2008), with the purpose of discussing a strategic model of analysis in Tourism education. Thus, the arguments presented in various articles can help to support the advocacy of a progressive emancipation of Tourism. It is a premise that is based on data for growth and greater autonomy of its own body of knowledge and consolidation of this academic subject area, as well as on quantitative analysis presented that shows the current importance of this area of study in Portuguese higher education. Thus, in this second phase we proceed to an extensive and updated collection of some of the most important indicators of Tourism in Higher Education institutions in Portugal.

The theoretical structure of this article (section 1) discusses the scientific status and nature of the tourism study as “pro-tourismology”, tourism as a multidisciplinary field of studies and a peculiar and singular post-disciplinary epistemological nature of the tourism studies. Following, the methodology (section 2) for the collection of data on the importance of education in Tourism is presented. The evolution of Higher Education in Tourism in Portugal (section 3) is briefly analysed, with some data for the academic year 2010/11, which is already available for the Tourism scientific area of studies, allowing to

map the current network of Higher Education Courses. Within this context, we analyse four key variables (vacancies, first time enrollers, enrolled, and graduated students). Finally, we present the draft of the National Observatory for Tourism Education (ONET) and its interest to establish a bridge between theory and reality in education in Tourism and analyse its contribution to the strengthening of the academic community that, in turn, will cooperate in the scientific affirmation of the Tourism Studies.

This project aims to explore the legitimacy of a direct link between education in Tourism and the development of the professionals, under a national perspective. It is relevant knowledge in order to present recommendations directed to a more effective management of the national network and consequently, to a better response to the growing international demand.

TOURISM STUDIES

Tourism is a scientific area of particular characteristics in an academic context. In part, they are inherited from its object of study, including: the immaturity of Tourism Studies, an interdisciplinary body of knowledge, the complexity of the tourism phenomenon, a variety of industry sectors, and its growing importance in social and economic contexts. These are some of the characteristics of the subject of Tourism that must be integrated to form a holistic perspective, which promotes the emancipation of the body of knowledge for Tourism Studies.

The two main meanings on this subject have divided the academic community: one is more practical and less controversial, considering Tourism as an area of study applied in many traditional disciplines, which allows the involvement of many researchers; while the other considers the progressive independence of Tourism as a separate subject. These two concepts will be developed according to the opinion of its advocates. In this context, it is interesting to understand that a scientific discipline requires compliance with a set of prerequisites. In fact, according to Dias (2009), we must recognize that an independent science is not born by self-proclamation, it is necessary to build consensus in the scientific community with regard to epistemological criteria, against which a science must be imposed. Thus, his choice for a 'Tourism Sciences' description seems more realistic but also more conservative, less ambitious and more adverse to innovation. Thus, the ambiguity (science versus science) merely reflects the inevitable rifts between desire and reality, past and future, innovation and *status quo* ... that still exist to the dignity of Tourism Studies.

Academics focused on Tourism Studies have written exhaustively on the merits of Tourism and have used several terms to decipher tourism's place in academia (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). For example, the term

'tourismology' deserves the interest of Cunha (2006, p. 26), who justifies the development of education and science in the field of Tourism with a view to higher levels of knowledge, necessary for several reasons: "(a) lack of a systemic study of tourism concerns, in particular its global context and not just limited to economic aspects, (b) lack of study of tourism also binds to the lack of formulation of a specific theory, (c) the absence of this formulation cause serious imbalances in education at all levels, especially at senior level, (d) the theory and training must be closely linked to applied scientific research base, (e) origin of these shortcomings are adopting inappropriate, wrong and, sometimes negative policies for the development of tourism". Hall et al. (2004) consider that tourism is a complex scientific field in terms of concerns, theories and methodologies, which is still characterized by continuous innovation and substantive debate and is involved in some of the biggest debates in social science.

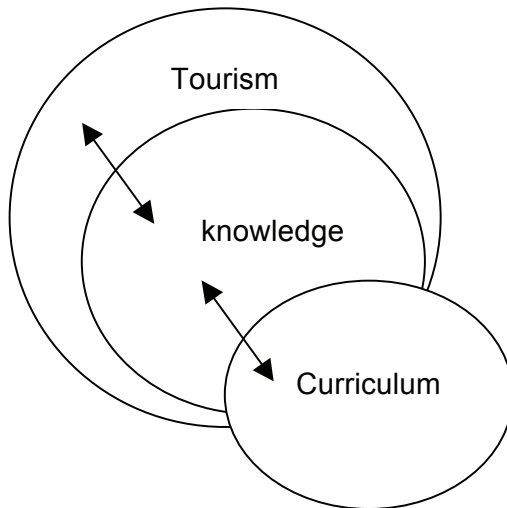
This article intends to recognize the immaturity of Tourism as a science, which has been a feature reported by many authors. Cooper et al. (1996) consider that the beginning of tourism education can be attributed to the opening of the Lausanne Hotel School in 1893. Indeed, it can be assumed that the training for Hospitality began at the end of the XIX century. In fact, hotel management is a more mature area but Tourism today presents a stage of considerable maturity, concisely stating its purpose and methods. In this sense, Jafari (1997) refers to hotel management as an important organ in tourism which needs the knowledge of the tourism system and also the way it connects with the other "organs" of the system. This analogy serves to illustrate that the human body is a system composed of several vital organs that, individually and collectively, ensure the survival of the body system, thus justifying also the integration of a coherent framework for Tourism. Cooper et al. (1996: 51) mention that "the problems associated with education in Tourism are typical of the midlife crisis because it is not too inexperienced to be an area and not reached the necessary maturity". In this context, education and research in tourism assume a key role to ensure their proper development, orderly and structured, as a scientific area.

Graburn and Jafari (1991) argue that the maturity of tourism was only adopted as a research topic when scientists discussed its subject of study, emerging as an academic field in the seventies, supported by the establishment of newspapers in multidisciplinary research, combining academic research with the applied one. According to Page (2003), tourism research has grown rapidly following the massive expansion of higher education throughout the world.

It is also important to understand the development of the body of knowledge of Tourism as an area of study. However, Cooper et al.

(1996) argue that there is still lack of an operational definition that can function as an aggregator of tourism in order to facilitate its global study, as well as the knowledge of the magnitude of the most important tourist indices on production, investment and consumption. The heterogeneity of tourist activities hinders the desired uniform definition as found in the frameworks of tourism in different ministries, depending on the countries considered.

According to Tribe (2005), figure 1 represents the relationship between the three components in the body of knowledge and considers that the tourism curriculum is smaller than the area of tourism knowledge. In turn, the knowledge of tourism represents only a portion of the tourism phenomenon. Additionally, since the curriculum is not only built from the knowledge of tourism, this circle includes other elements from outside of the world of tourism. Note the flow of the phenomenon of tourism through the knowledge of tourism education and tourism curriculum, which illustrates the refinement of the process under consideration. It highlights the important fact that the knowledge of tourism and tourism education has the opportunity to influence and change the phenomenon of tourism.



Source: Tribe, 2005 (pp. 50).

Figure 1. Tourism, knowledge and curriculum

Tribe (2006) examines the level of congruence between the theoretical world of tourism (the knowledge model) and the world of phenomena, adopting a constructivist approach to conceptualizing and analyzing its field of expertise, which falls between the two. The five

factors operating in their field of expertise are the people, the rules, the position, the purposes and ideology. The literature review exposes how these forces contribute to the dual selectivity in the creation of knowledge. Tribe believes that the full truth about tourism is still not revealed, resulting in gaps, silences and lapses.

The research and management of knowledge in Tourism have grown rapidly since 1990, determined by social, economic and technological tendencies (Cooper, 2006). However, this area has been slow in adopting this constructivist approach, not only by the lack of a mechanism for linking researchers around Tourism, but also an "hostile" environment to adopt knowledge. Its construction could help fill gaps in knowledge and provide lessons for their potential uses in tourism. Noting these facts, Cooper proposes an interesting model to generate greater efficiency in the generation of knowledge in tourism.

In fact, the main problem of theoretical development of Tourism is caused by unfit philosophical and methodological approaches, according to Echtner and Jamal (1997), for the specific levels of sound, which may be appropriate for scientific activity, but are not necessarily relevant to a normalized understanding. Researchers have adopted the concepts and techniques of their disciplines and applied them to the problems of tourism, without any rational change, thereby increasing debate about the theoretical and methodological issues in the literature. Furthermore, tourism scholars are continuing to grow the basis of epistemological knowledge in tourism research.

The use of the term Tourism should be accurate, particularly when it comes to the subject of studies because there are two divergent currents in the epistemological field, as set out below. In fact, Leiper (2000: 805-809) and Tribe (2000: 809-813) personalize the debate and exchange arguments in an attempt to support their perspectives on the scientific status and disciplinary nature of Tourism. Leiper acknowledges that disciplines manifest different attributes in each of its phases until their definite statement. Against this maturation process that considers a discipline as "a body of knowledge that is organized to some extent in a systematic way, ideally to help in teaching, learning and research" (2000, p. 807), Leiper points out that this debate on Tourism Studies is similar to the tourism industry itself.

Opposing this view, Tribe writes two provocative articles: "The Indiscipline of Tourism" (1997) and "Indisciplined and Unsubstantiated" (2000). The latter is in response to the article presented by Leiper - "An Emerging Discipline" (2000). According to Tribe, epistemologically, Tourism is not a discipline but a field of knowledge which makes use of a number of disciplines to investigate and explain their areas of interest. Tourism involves many human and societal aspects, so its knowledge is of a multidisciplinary nature. The multidisciplinary field

of Tourism has gained momentum in the field of academic research. Tourism is a composite academic community consisting of scholars from multiple disciplines.

Cunha (2001: 127) also discusses this view and indicates that Goeldner and Leiper have no doubt that Tourism Studies can be regarded as a discipline, and Gunn and Hoerner consider them as a science too. Leiper suggests using the term *turology* to designate the scientific studies of tourism. In turn, Sessa (1984) uses the term *tourismology* as the field of application of science to the tourism system. Jovicic also argues that the study of Tourism as a complex phenomenon cannot be adequately performed by any existing discipline and therefore proposes the adoption of *tourismology* as Hoerner (2000), to whom science would study tourism that is linked to the trip. Currently, it can be assumed that this terminology is now reportedly being taken over by a growing number of scientific researchers of the subject of Tourism. But Tribe maintains that this is only one field of multidisciplinary knowledge. Indeed, in 1981, Jafari built a model of Tourism Studies that illustrates its multidisciplinary nature. According to this model, it is a developing science, with contributions from many social sciences. That is, the knowledge of Tourism is a phenomenon with multiple influences, which implies the contribution of various branches of knowledge, as it continues to increase the complexity and diversity of phenomena that lead to travel.

Jovicic (1988) supports the establishment of this science as 'tourismology' and argues that this study, because it is a complex phenomenon, cannot be adequately done by just a single discipline. It is also suggested that the traditional disciplines fail when trying to circumscribe the notion of the whole in an attempt to explain its nature only through particular areas. The observation of elements, regardless of the whole, results in errors of definition of tourism as an economic, geographical or sociological phenomenon only. According to Jovicic, only the emergence of an autonomous subject, such as 'tourismology', could allow the development of an integrated theory of Tourism, which would facilitate the integration of specialized studies to take place in several disciplines.

Richards (1998) believes that the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) contributes to the development of the curriculum in Tourism and Leisure, at a European level, because it recognizes these academic areas, rather than considering them merely as appendages of other disciplines. In the context of ATLAS it is important to articulate Tourism Studies with Leisure, as many recent works that relate to the construction of the theory of scientific fields. From the literature review, Harris (2005) believes that Leisure Studies are also a discipline but with porous borders.

The transformation of Tourism involves the extension of knowledge to new fields, to recognize their true nature as a science, as the result of an independent body of knowledge of Tourism Studies. The empirical study is presented below to show the evolution and importance of Tourism in the context of Portuguese higher education.

METHODOLOGY

The diversity of disciplines that contribute to the study of tourism also reflects the range of academic qualifications and work experiences of educators. As a result, tourism programs assume the character of a particular specialist college or school. In higher education, many courses have the vocation of tourism business or basis in the social sciences. The diversity in types of schools and departments where these courses are taught is also noted. The philosophy adopted by these institutions is based on the trend to include the study of Tourism in business schools or faculties of social sciences. The educational reality shows the courses in analysis, under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, and distributed in the National Classification of Education and Training Areas (DR, 2005). It consists of a general area called Services, which includes Personal Services, with the areas of Hotel and Restaurant Management and Tourism and Leisure (Table 1). There are also Tourism courses in a sub-area with the designation of Management and Administration.

Table 1. Fractions of the national classification of education and training areas

Major Groups	Study Areas	Education and Training Areas
3 – Social Sciences, Commerce and Law	34 – Entrepreneurial Sciences	345 – Management and Administration
8 – Services	81 – Personal Services	811 - Hotel and Restaurant Management 812 – Tourism and Leisure

Source: Diário da República, 2005.

The Decree N. 782/2009 (DR, 2009) has set the National Qualifications Framework and defines the descriptors to characterize the levels of national qualification since October 1st, 2010. In this new framework, Higher Education integrates skill levels from V to VIII. At level VI, the corresponding degree - 1st cycle, a thorough understanding of a field of study or work that requires a critical understanding of theories and principles is intended. This level is based on advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of study or work, aiming

to provide the following attitudes: manage businesses or complex technical or professional projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable contexts of work or study; to assume responsibility for managing individual and collective professional development. Thus, education in these level VI courses can be applied to the study of tourism due to the interest and the need to investigate the evolution and current state of this scientific area in the national educational system.

In this context, and after a literature review of Tourism Studies themes, in order to interpret the different perspectives of researchers on the current situation, we will verify if the collected data can support the thesis of gradual emancipation of Tourism as a scientific discipline. On the one hand, it is a premise that is based on data for growth and greater autonomy of its own body of knowledge and, secondly, the consolidation of this academic subject area based on quantitative analysis presented below, which shows their current situation in Portuguese higher education. Thus, in the second phase we proceed to an extensive and updated collection of some of the most important indicators of Tourism in Higher Education in Portugal.

TOURISM EDUCATION AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

Currently, graduate courses (1st cycle) in the tourism sector are implemented in universities and polytechnics. In this context, we present two statistical series (Figures 2 and 3) to systematize data on indicators relevant for interpreting the evolution and importance of Tourism. This quantitative analysis seeks to complement the description of the behaviour of this area until 2010/11.

The adequacy of higher education courses to the Bologna Process has lead to an offer of 81 degree courses in Tourism (31 in the private and 50 in the public sector), with three more courses (+3.7%) in 2010/11. This offer represents a total of 3449 places, being slightly higher in the public sector with 1784 (Figure 2). It is also important to note that studies of tourism continue to occur predominantly in a polytechnic subsystem (67 courses) compared to universities (14 courses). This analysis reveals the strong growth trend of this variable in the teaching of Tourism.

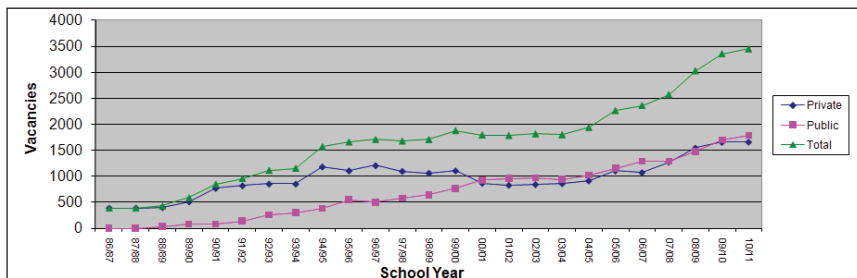


Figure 2. Vacancies in higher education in tourism in Portugal

In the academic year 2009/10, on the first stage of applications to higher education, there were 1454 candidates placed in courses (86%, representing a decrease in demand of 1% over the previous year) for the 1696 places available. Thus, it can be stated that this area continues to present a significant demand on the part of candidates.

For further analysis, Figure 3 represents the statistical series of 1st time enrollers in higher education courses in the area of tourism and shows that a considerable growth occurred since 1986/87. Firstly, the essential role of private higher education can be noted, but the two sectors have different growth trends. The public sector demonstrates a considerable increase in enrolment in the 1st year compared to the private sector, since 1997/98. In the last academic year, higher education has enrolled 2841 new students with 2081 in the public and 760 in the private sector, representing approximately 3.4% of the number of new registrations. The greater attractiveness of the public sector is translated by the difference of 1321 new subscribers. Tourism presents a rate of 82% of the total registered for the 1st time in relation to the total of vacancies (3449).

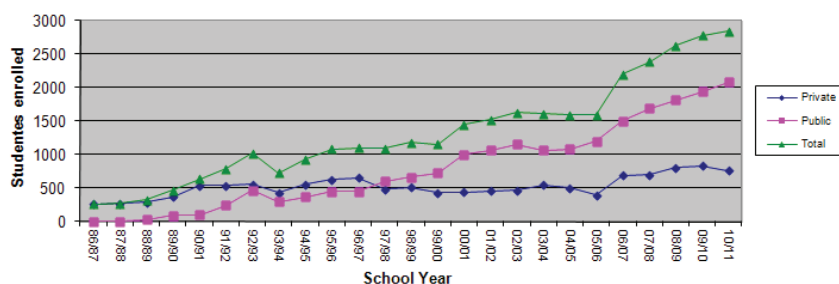


Figure 3. Students enrolled for the 1st time in tourism in higher education

Curricular and educational changes due to the Bologna Process are considerable in the degrees from the scientific area of Tourism. Today, it is concluded that this area is fully integrated in this adaptation of higher education. It is also important to investigate and evaluate the developments within the 2nd and 3rd cycles of higher education, as well as in technological specialization courses (CET). In fact, the analysis of some variables on the quantitative reality of Tourism degree courses within the public and private subsystems is essential in order to understand its behaviour within the academic paradigm.

TOURISM EDUCATION IN ONET

According to Jansen-Verbeke (2009), one way to gain credibility is the founding of an academic community with a global network. For example, the European Commission has encouraged the development

of European Thematic Networks to group scholars in order to discuss issues of common interest within their discipline (Richards, 1998). ATLAS is an important network that supports the importance of curriculum and education in Tourism and Leisure.

The lack of a rigorous educational policy for Tourism teaching in Higher Education in Portugal is inconsistent with the importance and the corresponding weight of this economic activity in the country and its regions (Salgado, 2007). In this regard, the importance of research on education in Tourism, which can take place in the Portuguese academy, is stressed especially starting from the diagnosis of the national reality to establish some guidelines that allow for a better coordination and interaction among the existing players.

In this context, in 2008 the draft of the National Tourism Education Observatory (ONET) was presented at the IASK International Conference in Tourism Research (Salgado, 2008). The ONET is intended as a tool for collecting, organizing and disseminating relevant knowledge in the tourism sector so as to contribute to the targeted links between education and training systems and the corresponding national employment market.

This project is being developed by a team of researchers from four national academic institutions that also considers the interest of a regional observatory. The interest of this regional approach is discussed by Brandão and Costa (2010). Tourism Observatories support regional tourism destinations management and competitiveness, as the destination management at regional level is becoming increasingly important, which makes systematic data collection and processing essential to support the reasoning of either political or business decision-making. The complexity of training in tourism and the perceived disconnection between the stakeholders are thus assumed; and as such, this study tries to clarify the current situation in Tourism in order to suggest paths to increase efficiency in this system in the geographical space in Portugal.

However, the establishment of an integrated training system in the scientific area of tourism in the Portuguese Higher Education system is an important strategy to ensure the sustained development of the sector (Salgado, 2007). This relationship recognizes the indispensability of training and educational processes in this scientific area in a more efficient way, allowing it to reach its own scientific status as a teaching area. These processes depend also on the rigor of curricular organization and of the network system structure providing essential tools for modern educational practice.

In Tourism, the courses must be established according to national and regional needs, and to the integrated planning of the respective private and public network. The educational system in tourism aims to assure the integrated planning (in a network) of the institutions and

courses at a national level, but originating from the previous regional coordination, assumed in each planning region. This is a will expressed by most of the authorities that registered countless advantages in this network association. The reference to the fact that the existing courses do not take into account regional needs in an integrated planning of the corresponding public and private network, leads to the conclusion that this network is essential for a more effective reorganization of the Tourism education system.

The curricular and educational methods used in the last twenty years in education in tourism are visibly inadequate to the new reality resulting from the full implementation of the Bologna Process. A great effort to adapt is thus required, because the training system design is increasingly adapted to the European level, and may include strategies that promote quality and efficiency that are requirements for a better coordination between curriculum theory and traineeship in tourism. This enlargement to a European level also means a new network relationship. The interaction in the academic community is the path required to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Process. The new model of training system proposed here, depends on the increasing collaboration of people in a network structure, both at national and regional levels, to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness of the training processes in question.

As a place for analysis, this article aims to function as a working tool which is intended to project into the future of the academic community that revolves around tourism, as it is supported by a study that analyzed the evolution of higher education in tourism in our country, aiming to improve the current educational model through qualitative changes in curricula and education in Tourism. This study reveals the principles and concepts behind the organization of the training system at regional and national (network) levels, which intends to use the restructuring of the Portuguese educational model, which is now in rapid transformation with the aim of meeting the various European challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

The interpretation of different perspectives and opinions, prevailing yet in the scientific community, are positioning Tourism between an applied area of study, from other disciplines, and as an autonomous subject; but both perspectives have defensible arguments, in our opinion. However, scientific progress and changing attitudes within science and society can help to explain the evolution of the social, scientific and educational importance of this field. On the one hand, the structure of its body of knowledge and, secondly, the methods of teaching and research gradually lead to their growing scientific maturation.

The “middle age” of education in Tourism, reported by Cooper, is the result of a process of evolution that allows a progressive maturity and sufficient social, scientific and educational levels to assert itself as a science and discipline. Indeed, the growing economic and social recognition, the maturity of the research and body of knowledge and also the educational level, achieved through considerable efforts in many academic institutions, have validated and classified tourism as a science and discipline, especially in Portugal.

So, the preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from this paper provide support, with some security, in defense of the theory of achieving an interaction model of institutions with training in tourism at the regional level. This model would support the strategies leading to a networking organization in Portugal, which includes the institutions of public and private subsystems, and also includes the interaction of institutions of polytechnics and universities.

Portuguese tourism should not miss the train of change that is going through inevitably in Europe and worldwide. It is a demanding process of adaptation that has to be accompanied by higher education institutions. To track changes, nothing could be better than to frame this science in education in order to transform it into the academic field with recognized scientific status among peers. Education in Tourism is an essential part of that changing environment that occurs worldwide. The Bologna Process is attempting to “tidy up” at a European level, in order to regulate some of these changes, and also at national and regional levels. If the necessary adequacy of tourism education is not carried in a rigorous way, the Portuguese higher education system is in danger of losing competitiveness in an important scientific area.

The new reality in education, particularly in higher education, requires appropriate responses. There is an economic strand that is being imposed on the management of schools (not forgetting the curricular perspective), taking into account the employment market and other markets. These and other realities that require adjustments, regionally and nationally, align in the Bologna proposals at a European level.

The inclusion of tourism in the national training system can be guided towards the professionalization of technicians in any of the branches of the sector. It is a location where the curricular organization has a role, from planning to the development of strategies. Today, the importance of tourism is taken for granted. Hence, the various trends have to be identified and properly monitored in order to incorporate them into strategies for action, whether in the depths of the industry itself, whether in education, due to the necessary updating of the curricula, and also their integration in regional network structure. Uncovering the labour and training needs demands an appropriate response, which is achieved by making a careful and continuous monitoring of all realities, in order to be able to adjust at any moment.

In this national context we suggest following several recommendations in order: to promote cooperation and communication between all higher education institutions, streamline and integrate networks of public and private higher education systems, polytechnic or university; establish the link between education levels, particularly with regard to training content and skills; implement Higher Education in areas deprived of skilled workers, such as catering, entertainment and restaurants; provide more dignity to the image of the careers created in the sector, especially the hotel and catering areas; better manage human and financial resources in order to dignify the training at a professional and higher level.

As specific contributions of this analysis, we would state that tourism deserves to be progressively recognized by the several Portuguese institutions as an autonomous field of education (as presented in CNAEF) and research, especially by the Foundation for Science and Technology. In this context, higher education institutions could also recognize and integrate Tourism in their names. However, we believe that the epistemological and political consequences of these conclusions don't have the necessary empirical evidence and that we should hear the several stakeholders in the educational and scientific institutions.

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